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It describes, indeed, the straitnesses and sadnesses of growing years; but sets off against them the more than preponderant immunities and felicities. It treats of the duties of the aged, and of their rights and dues at the hands of the younger. It gives biographical sketches and anecdotes of good and happy old men and women. And, above all, it blends with the serene sunset of a well-spent life the young morning beams of the never-setting day. It will carry solace to many a fire-side, and will rekindle hope and gladness in many a soul that hardly dares to look into its earthly future.

Mrs. Sigourney furnishes a striking refutation of the not unusual idea that a poet's prose is none the better for the habit of metrical composition. Hers is not poetry dismembered, but chaste and modest prose, free from the intrusive licenses of verse, yet thoroughly interpenetrated with the poetic imagination which gives grace and glow alike to all forms of literature.

24. — "*It is Never too Late to Mend.*" *A Matter of Fact Romance.*

By CHARLES READE. Boston: Ticknor and Fields. 1856. 2 vols. 12mo. pp. 423, 424.

EITHER we did injustice to Mr. Reade in our late review of his previous novels, or he did not do justice to himself in them. This exhibits a power of which they, to us at least, gave no token. Here we have a story embracing a wonderful variety of scenes, events, and characters, all so developed as to leave no obscurity, so harmonized as never to clash or become entangled, and so grouped as to bring out, without obtrusive moralizing, a manifold illustration of the maxim that forms the title, and of not a few fundamental moralities beside. A large portion of the work is given to the exposure of the abuses and enormities connected with or incidental to the so-called improvements of prison discipline, the solitary system, and the irresponsible power which it lodges in its administrators. Another large portion consists of a series of intensely graphic sketches of life in Australia; while the story opens and closes in the rural neighborhood in England which gave birth to its principal actors. The entire work is pervaded by a strong and high moral purpose; and by means of it the author has assumed and fortified his position, as that of one whose office it is not to amuse, but to instruct, reform, and elevate.